

# GRIZZLY FLATS COMMUNITY CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

*Revised January, 29 2006*

In support of the purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, the following is established as a guide for the orderly function of the corporation, hereinafter called the church. Since the Holy Scriptures are ultimately binding on this church as providing a unique and absolute authority for the conduct of its affairs, the following bylaws are to be opened for review so that they may be amended (1) when any of them is seen to conflict with God's Word in any way or (2) when any of them appears to be hindering the fulfillment of the stated principles of this, Christ's Church.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of the corporation, a church incorporated under the laws of the State of California, is Grizzly Flats Community Church. This constitution was established on June 14, 1987 (last revised on November 5, 1995) and revised on January 29 2006.

## **ARTICLE II: MAIN PURPOSE AND BASIC FUNCTIONS**

**Section 1:** The chief objective of Grizzly Flats Community Church is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31; Eph 1:3-14). In recognition of this purpose, we will endeavor to conduct our lives and services in a worshipful way, with the reality of God in view, so that we may ascribe to Him and reflect back to Him, as He enables, the characteristics of what He is, especially His truth, holiness and love. **Section 2:** A consequent purpose of Grizzly Flats Community Church is to edify one another, that is to build one another up toward Christ-like maturity (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16). This will call for the sharing of God's truth in the teaching and studying of God's Word, for the publishing of whatever materials will aid in spiritual growth, for the living of holy lives, and for a living fellowship in the things of Christ, sharing whatever we have with one another as others may have need and as God may direct. **Section 3:** As well as edification, a parallel purpose of Grizzly Flats Community Church is to involve ourselves in world-wide evangelism (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8). This may be accomplished by declaring God's good news about Christ to those who live near us and by sponsoring missionaries under God's direction. We endeavor by God's power to manifest changed lives in all our relationships and to show Christ's compassion wherever people are needy and suffering.

## **ARTICLE III: DOCTRINAL POSITION**

Grizzly Flats Community Church is committed to the following essential beliefs:

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, without error in the original manuscripts, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks ( 2 Timothy 3:14-

17, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Hebrews 1:1-2).

**On this sure foundation we affirm these additional essentials of our faith:**

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever (Matthew 3:16-17, John 1:1-4, Philippians 2:5-11).
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator (Matthew 1:20-23, John 14:6, Ephesians 1:7-12).
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption, (John 14:15-17, 16:5-15, Ephesians 1:7-12).
4. Mankind was created by God, in His image, but through Adam's use of his free will to rebel against God all mankind became sinners in both nature and actions. Mankind is now under condemnation; each life headed for damnation ( Genesis 1:26-27, 3:6, 17-19, Romans 5:12).
5. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifying them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life with Christ in glory ( John 1:12-13, 3:3-8, 1 Peter 1:23).
6. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the ordinances are practiced in their integrity, where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord ( Matthew 16:16-19, Ephesians 4:11-16, Titus 2:1-10, Matthew 18 ).
7. The redeemed life in Christ is a daily walk of faith carrying over outside the Church into all of one's life. Only the redeemed can live life as God intended with the purpose and potential of a child of God (Romans 6:4, 2 John 1:6, Ephesians 4:22-24).
8. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth--personally, visibly, and bodily--to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (John 14:1-3, Acts 1:9-11, Revelation 22:20).

## **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1: Becoming a Member**

Membership in Grizzly Flats Community Church shall be open to anyone who professes personal faith in Christ for his eternal salvation, who has signified this by water baptism after conversion and who shows evidence of having a new life in Christ. He must also be in agreement with the doctrinal position of the church as described in Article III.

A prospective member shall acquaint any elder as to his desire for membership. After he has given evidence to the elders of having met the qualifications\*, his name will be presented to the membership for consideration. Following the unanimous recommendation of the elders a person may be considered to be under the shepherding care of the elders and a recipient of the brotherly commitment of the whole membership for his personal growth and well being. He may then become a member by signing the following Agreement of Fellowship. (See separate page.) *\*(This is normally done through the process of participating in and completing membership class.)*

## **Section 2: Responsibility of Members**

Each member is responsible before God as a believer-priest to assist in determining the will of Christ for this local assembly under Christ. Thus each member must be involved in giving feedback to the church concerning personal needs and in sharing insights in areas where God's will must be known for the church. He must, therefore, be able to submit himself to the Lord in prayer so that he learns to discern the voice of the Chief Shepherd as He leads the flock. In general each member will be responsible, as God gifts and enables him, to do his part in the "work of service" (Eph. 4:12, 1 Pet. 4:10, 11). This calls for the regular participation in the life and services of the church, including a voluntary contribution of financial support as the Lord may prosper him (Heb 10:24, 25, 1 Cor 16:1,2; II Cor. 8:3-5).

## **Section 3: Termination of Membership**

Members of the church are expected to conduct their lives in accordance with Biblical standards of holiness as they grow to become more like Christ. When a member knowingly ignores the direct commands and prohibitions of scripture, he shall be dealt with according to the principles of restoration and discipline found in such passages as Matthew 18, Galatians 6, II Thessalonians 3, I Corinthians 5, Matthew 7:1-5, etc. Members in the early churches were subject to confrontation for reasons such as: unwillingness to become reconciled to an offended brother (Matt. 18:15-17), unwillingness to engage in work (II Thess. 3:6-15), divisiveness in the church (Rom. 16:17,18; Tit. 3:9,10), sexual immorality (I Cor. 5:1-13), false teaching (I Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:17,18) and general sinful conduct (Gal. 6:1). When such actions lead to the regrettable obligation of terminating a person from membership, this will be based upon the unanimous agreement of the council of elders.

Members who unite with other churches shall inform the elders so that their names may be dropped from the membership roll. When the church is not informed of this, the member will automatically be dropped after he has been absent from the services of the church for four months. The elders shall make reasonable efforts to contact any members of the church who have been absent for such length of time, so that the reasons may be ascertained and restoration may be effected. Infrequent attendance at services for reasons other than illness and vacations, etc., shall also prompt an informal inquiry by the elders as to the sincerity of the member's commitment to the health and welfare of the church.

# **ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP AND OFFICERS**

## **Section 1: The Chief Shepherd**

Jesus Christ, God's Son, is the sole Head of Grizzly Flats Community Church, the Leader before whom all merely human leaders must bow (Eph. 1:22,23; Matt. 23:8-11; 1 Pet. 5:4). He

communicates His will for the church through His Word, the Bible. He gives us additional guidance by means of the specific leading of the Holy Spirit who indwells the heart of each true believer. He also shepherds the flock by giving the church under-shepherds who are commissioned, under His leadership, with the task of equipping the flock for its full functioning (Eph. 4:7-16). In a real sense, Grizzly Flats Community Church belongs to Him; He has taken the responsibility for ordering the life of the church so that He may someday present it to Himself glorious, without any spot or wrinkle that would detract from heaven's beauty (Eph. 5:25-27).

## **Section 2: Under-shepherds (also called elders, overseers, and pastors)**

### *Duties.*

During the physical absence of the Chief Shepherd, the pastoral care of the flock shall be committed to the hands of the elders, who shall consist of those men in the congregation who know the Chief Shepherd best and are most like Him in spirit and character. Their duties will be, in general, to equip all believers in the assembly for proper functioning, so that the whole flock may be built up toward Christ-likeness and unity (Eph. 4:11-16). As representatives of Christ, they are to fulfill the following duties by the power and authority of Christ:

#### **A: EQUIPPING BY LEARNING FACILITATION**

1. In exposition (teaching). 1 Tim, 5:17 / Heb 13:7
2. In exhortation (preaching and counseling). Tit. 1:9
3. In admonition (counseling). 1 Thess. 5:12
4. In humble example (life). 1 Tim. 3:1-7 / Tit. 1:6-9 / Heb 13:17

#### **B: EQUIPPING BY DIRECTION**

1. In leading and guiding into new things; decision making. Acts 16:4 / 1 Tim. 3:5 / 5:17 / Heb 13:7, 17-24
2. In overseeing the existing life of the church: evaluation and administration. Acts 11:30 / 20:28 / 1 Thess. 5:12 / Heb. 13:17

#### **C: EQUIPPING BY PROTECTION**

1. In guarding the flock from false teaching. Acts 20:28-31
2. In refuting false teachers and scoffers. Tit. 1:9

#### **D: EQUIPPING BY WILLING SERVICE**

1. In working hard at personal Bible study. 1 Tim 5:17 / Tit 1:9
2. In opening his home in loving hospitality. 1 Tim 3:2 / Tit 1:8
3. In helping the weak according to their needs. Acts 20:35
4. In anointing and praying for the sick. James 5:14

#### **E: EQUIPPING BY RECOGNIZING NEW ELDERS OR MISSIONARIES IN THE CHURCH 1 Tim. 4:14**

The arrangements of these ministries among the various elders in the church will be determined

according to the mutual submission of the elders to one another under the Lord, for His glory and for the good of the whole church. All of the elders will be responsible for the task of decision-making as it pertains to the recognition of elders and missionaries. The council of elders will have sufficient time together in prayer and mutual exhortation in order that their unity may be preserved under the leadership of Christ.

#### *Qualifications:*

In order to accomplish the above-mentioned duties, the elders must be men who are above reproach in relation to the qualities of maturity given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

1. Husband of 1 wife
2. Temperate
3. Sensible
4. Respectable
5. Hospitable
6. Able to teach and defend right doctrine
7. Not addicted to wine
8. Not self-willed
9. Not quick-tempered
10. Not pugnacious
11. Uncontentious
12. Gentle
13. Free from the love of money
14. Managing his own children and household well
15. Well-respected by unbelievers
16. Loving what is good
17. Just
18. Devout
19. Humble / not a new convert

#### *Recognition of Elders:*

Since it is really God who makes men overseers by maturing them and burdening them with such a ministry, then it is the responsibility of the church to recognize the men whom the Holy Spirit is appointing for pastoral functioning (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11). The process of recognition will be as follows:

1. Any member of Grizzly Flats Community Church may present one of the male members for consideration as an elder by completing and signing an evaluation form (which involves a record of how this man measures up to the above-mentioned scriptural qualities of an elder) and submitting it to the existing council of the church. Each person so presented will be considered seriously.
2. The council, by unanimous consent, will prayerfully decide whether the man suggested should be regarded as a true candidate for the office of elder. In determining this, the council will contact the man himself in order to determine his assessment of God's will for him in this matter (1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:2).
3. If the man desires the office under the Lord's direction, the council will then take reasonable

time to get to know the candidate. This time will provide for (a) continued prayer and fasting in order to discover God's will (Acts 13:23), (b) a period to familiarize the man with the functions of an elder and (c) a sufficient opportunity for the existing leaders to develop their relationship with the person and to evaluate his spiritual depth and character as one who might share in the ministry of equipping the saints (1 Tim. 5:22). Any areas of life in which the man is found lacking will call for a discipler /disciple relationship between one of the existing council and the prospective elder, so that these deficiencies may be dealt with directly.

4. Following this probationary period, the council, by unanimous consent, may present the name of the candidate to the congregation for consideration. The whole fellowship will be given at least two weeks to express themselves regarding the candidate, remembering to follow the steps in Matthew 18 if there is the prospect of a bad report. They may acquaint the council of their reactions either by personally talking to one of the leaders or by writing the church council.
5. Any objections concerning the candidate which might surface during this process will be worked through in a constructive manner with the man involved, so that any deficiencies or misunderstandings may be corrected.
6. When the church council is assured of God's direction and after prayer, the new elder will be confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the council in the presence of the congregation. (Men who have been ordained as elders in other assemblies will not be automatically recognized as elders at Grizzly Flats Community Church; such men will be subject to the same process of recognition as any other man in the assembly.)

#### *Term:*

The elders shall serve an indefinite term. Any elder may be disciplined according to biblical principles, although no accusation against an elder is to be taken seriously unless there are two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19). When a confronted elder "continues in sin," he is to be rebuked by the other elders before the whole assembly, that others may fear (1 Tim. 5:20). An elder will be subject to scrutiny not only in the areas which might call for general church discipline, but also as to his continued meeting of the qualifications for eldership listed above. When an elder ceases to meet those qualifications, he shall be asked by the elders to step aside for a time so that he may get his life in order in that area. Such a request from the other elders shall be made only when they are in unanimous agreement. An elder may also desire to be relieved from office either temporarily or permanently, if he feels unable to serve for any reason. The process of his possible reinstatement at a later time will be determined by the elders in relation to the attendant circumstances.

### **Section 3: Deacons**

#### *Duties:*

The elders will be assisted by deacons in the specific ministries of the church. These positions of service in the body are designed to relieve elders from any affairs that would interfere with their primary involvement in the Word and prayer. Every deacon is to be involved in conducting a specific area of service in the church, under the direction of the Lord and the supervision of the elders. The deacons shall individually advise the elders as to the decisions which affect the life and ministry of the church, as part of the Church Board.

### *Qualifications:*

The deacons are to be men of high level of spiritual maturity, who display the qualities mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6.

1. Dignified
2. Not double-tongued
3. Not addicted to wine
4. Not fond of sordid gain
5. Holding his faith with a clear conscience
6. Husband of one wife
7. Managing well his children and household
8. Of good reputation
9. Full of the Spirit and wisdom

### *Recognition:*

Deacons may be recognized in the church as follows:

1. When there is a need for a specific ministry in the church and when a member is available who has the ability and desire to meet that need in a mature and Godly way, he may be presented for consideration as a deacon. Any member of Grizzly Flats Community Church may submit the name of another member by completing and signing the evaluation form for a deacon and submitting it to one of the elders.
2. The council will consider the person on the basis of his meeting the biblical qualifications and on the basis of church needs. By unanimous consent of the elders, the person may be regarded as a true candidate for the office of deacon. The man in question will also be contacted to determine his assessment of God's will for him in this matter.
3. The remainder of the procedure will follow the basic steps outlined above for the recognition of an elder, including the time of probation and the two weeks for congregational feedback. When any deficiencies have been dealt with, the candidate may then be presented to the congregation for recognition as a deacon, upon the unanimous recommendation of the council. Upon affirmation by a consensus of the congregation and after prayer, the new deacon will be confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders in the presence of the congregation (Acts 6:6) and will be set apart to the Lord for the faithful fulfillment of the specific service envisioned.

### *Term:*

Deacons shall serve a term according to the specific demands of the service for which they were recognized, after which they shall be available for other ministries as needs arise and as long as they continue to qualify. When a deacon who previously served in another capacity is assigned to a new area of service, he shall have a new commission to accomplish the task in a faithful way (but without the laying on of hands). Any deacon will be subject to the same discipline as any other member; he may also be asked to step down as a deacon if he does not continue to meet the qualifications for a deacon. Such a request must be by the unanimous agreement of the elders. The process of his possible reinstatement at a later time will be determined by the elder(s) in relation to the attendant

circumstances.

## **ARTICLE VI: OFFICIAL MEETINGS AND FINANCES**

### **Section 1: Meetings of the Membership**

The membership shall meet at least annually for the purpose of evaluating together the progress of the church toward meeting its stated objectives (given Article II), and at other times as needs may arise. Notice of such meetings shall be given by the council at least two weeks in advance. All members should come humbly and prayerfully seeking Christ's mind concerning the life of the church.

A quorum shall consist of sixty percent (60%) of the church members who are 18 years of age and older. In all matters of business, full agreement by all such members of the congregation shall be prayerfully sought, although as low as ninety percent (90%) may be regarded as meeting the requirement for a consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, the congregation will seek God's will further. Matters will continue as before until a consensus decision can be reached under the direction of Christ.

### **Section 2: Church Board**

For administrative purposes the Church Board shall consist of the elder(s) and deacon(s). The Elder Council provides the spiritual leadership and headship of the Church and of the Church Board.

### **Section 3: Financial Policies**

The ministries and program of Grizzly Flats Community Church shall be funded by the voluntary gifts and offerings of God's people. No gifts to the church will be made public or the donor identified. A written account of receipts and disbursements shall be arranged for by the treasurer of the church.

Acquisition and disposition of real property and any equipment valued in excess of \$10,000.00 shall be effected by the council of elders only after ascertaining an affirmative consensus of the membership, following the unanimous agreement of the elders. An annual budget shall be presented to the congregation for affirmative consensus on the unanimous recommendation of the council. This shall be presented at one of the official meetings of the membership (Section 1).

Elders as such shall not receive any stated salaries for their services, except that certain elders designated as staff elders by the council may be paid salaries and receive housing and other allowances as the council shall decide (1 Tim. 5:17, 18). The freeing of certain elders to serve in the church on a salaried basis shall in no way be construed as interfering with the equality of office shared among all the elders. No action of the council on the matter of salaries shall be deemed to be in force until it is ratified by the consensus of the members of the congregation. (The salaries and benefits of others who may serve in the church, such as secretaries, etc., shall also be subject to the unanimous recommendation of the council and the consensus of the congregation.)

## **ARTICLE VII: AMENDING THE BYLAWS**

Amendments to this document may be made upon the affirmative consensus of the membership following the unanimous recommendation of the council of elders. Notice of any proposed amendments must be made at least four weeks prior to the date of their intended adoption by the church. During that period, any member with concern or evidence that the contemplated change is not God's will, may make this known to the Church Board and council of elders in writing. Objections to the amendment will then be discussed openly at the meeting of adoption; after consensus has been reached, the amendment will be in force.

ADOPTED THIS 29th DAY OF January 2006 BY A CONSENSUS OF THE MEMBERS OF GRIZZLY FLATS COMMUNITY CHURCH.

*Eric R. Paulsen, Grizzly Flats Community Church Board Secretary*  
Signing for the corporation

## **AGREEMENT OF FELLOWSHIP**

Having been led by God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, and desiring to unite in the worship, fellowship and testimony of Grizzly Flats Community Church and to place myself under its spiritual protection and direction, and Having read the Doctrinal Position and being in full agreement with it, I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby express my desire to enter into the following agreement with the other believers of Grizzly Flats Community Church.

We recognize certain responsibilities, which are ours as part of Christ's Body:

1. To give ourselves regularly to the study of God's Word and to prayer;
2. To worship God in spirit and in truth, in response to God's revelation of Himself in His Word, in the splendors of nature, in the systematic ordering of our lives, and above all in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;
3. To spread the Gospel of Christ near and far, as God may direct, with the intention of bringing each one who is saved to a place of maturity in Christ;
4. To share with one another, whether of insights, time or material resources;
5. To help one another discover our spiritual gifts and use them for the building up of one another and for the glory of God;
6. To demonstrate our love to the Lord and our loyalty to each other by saying only what is good about one another unless we follow Matthew 18 with a goal of restoring;
7. To encourage one another to build strong families, where Christ's character is becoming more evident in each member;
8. To encourage men to function with godly maturity, as those who are accountable for the welfare of the congregation and of their individual families;
9. To motivate women to a life of godly faithfulness by providing meaningful ministries and financial assistance for them when they are older and without husband or relatives who can support them; and
10. To project to all a loving and helpful spirit, contributing toward unity in Christ's body, so that the world may know the reality of Christ and that we are His true disciples.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_